

FEBRUARY 2005: The Washington/Baltimore area experienced above normal temperatures, subnormal precipitation with near normal snowfall. DCA, BWI and IAD observed monthly temperature departures of +1.5°F, +1.2°F and +2.6°F, respectively. All three winter months (December-February) recorded above normal temperatures at the three major airports for 7th year out of the past 15 (see cover graphic). The month featured two mild spells, 4th-10th and the 12th-16th when highs routinely reached into the 50's and soared at or above 60°F at many locations on the 8th, 9th, 15th and 16th. Although the region experienced cold conditions periodically, there were no prolonged periods of Arctic air across the area. In fact, neither DCA nor IAD logged any days with subfreezing highs; BWI recorded only one such day (31°F on 18th). Highs held in the 30's on 5 days at IAD, 6 days at DCA and 7 at BWI. Minimum temperatures in the teens were observed on only 3 days (1st, 2nd, 19th) at most locations; DCA's extreme monthly temperature was only 20°F on the 19th.

February precipitation totaled 1" -2" across most of the area, yielding monthly deficits of 1.36" at BWI and 1.0" at DCA. February featured three storms of moderate intensity, with the first producing rain and the next two dumping mostly snow across the Washington/Baltimore area. On Valentine's Day, a brief period of wet snow changed to rain and brought the local area about a half inch of melted precipitation. Two snow events followed on the 24th and 28th, but neither resulted in major transportation slowdowns because snow did not stick to most roads. Snowfall totals on the 24th ranged from 3"- 7", with the largest accumulations south and east of Washington/Baltimore, including Prince Georges, Anne Arundel and Calvert Counties in Maryland. On the 28th, the heaviest snow fell on the northern and western portions of the local area. Snow amounts between 6"- 8" were common west and north of Washington with as much as 11" observed in portions of the Shenendoah Valley. DCA reported only 2.2" of snow.

FEBRUARY 2004 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In.)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	Dep Nml	Snow
National (DCA)	48.2	30.9	39.6	38.1	+1.5	64/16	20/19	1.63	2.63	-1.00	5.2
Baltimore (BWI)	46.0	27.4	36.7	35.5	+1.2	63/16	14/2	1.66	3.02	-1.36	9.0
Dulles (IAD)	47.3	27.4	37.4	34.8	+2.6	63/8*	13/2	1.41	2.77	-1.36	8.7

Other Occurrences: *15

WINTER (DECEMBER-FEBRUARY) 2004-2005: The winter was highlighted by above normal temperatures, subnormal precipitation and near normal snowfall. Seasonal temperatures averaged about 1°F above normal at DCA to as much as 2.5°F above normal at IAD, a sharp contrast to those observed a year earlier. Seasonal precipitation totals were slightly below normal at the three major airports with three-month deficits of slightly over an inch common. Snowfall was near normal at most locations with seasonal amounts between 11" and 17" reported at DCA, BWI and IAD. December temperatures were a roller coaster ride with a much warmer than normal start to the month and up and down temperatures. Bitter cold days with winds up to 47 mph at DCA gave way to highs at or near 60°F at many locations in December. Temperatures plummeted again below freezing at IAD from the 24th-27th but highs rebounded to 60°F at both BWI and IAD on New Years Eve. January showed a split personality. For the first 14 days, temperatures averaged more than 10°F above normal at DCA. The three major airports recorded 5 days with highs at or above 60°F, including one day (13th) when highs hit or exceeded 70°F at DCA and BWI. Daily record highs were set on New Years Day at all three major airports, with highs of 69°F at DCA, 68°F at IAD and 67°F at BWI. Washington was on pace for a balmy January until a dramatic shift in weather occurred about mid-month. Repeated blasts of Arctic air brought unusually cold weather into the eastern U.S., which continued from mid January through month's end. February ended the season with warmer than normal temperatures.

The season started with near normal precipitation levels in December, almost all of which was rain. Most of the precipitation came from four stormy periods. One storm brought winds gusts to 56 mph at BWI, 52 mph at DCA, and 45 mph at IAD, producing power outages to more than 40,000 residents, according to press reports. On December 19th, a brief period of wet snow, accompanied in some areas by thunder and lightning, yielded up to 3" of snow in Anne Arundel County and across parts of southern Maryland with the arrival of an Arctic blast of air. The local area escaped a significant snowfall that impacted southeast Virginia and Maryland's Eastern Shore on December 26th. January precipitation averaged slightly above normal at the three major airports with amounts between 3"-5" common across most of the area. The first half of the month featured a major rainstorm on the 13th-14th when more than 2" soaked most of the local region, leading to several water rescues, flooded roads and numerous road closures, according to press reports. Daily records for rainfall were set at DCA, 1.82"; and IAD, 1.79" and near record at BWI, 1.94". The season's first measurable snowfall, on the 19th, brought 1"-2" at most locations. A second winter storm brought 3" to 5" of snow on the 22nd. The month's final winter storm dropped wet snow, sleet and freezing rain on the 29th-30th. The frigid temperatures and frequent winter storms provided snow cover at many locations from the 19th through month's end. February brought two moderate snowfalls and drier than normal conditions overall (see above).

WINTER 2004-2005 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In.)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	Dep Nml	Snow
National (DCA)	46.4	30.7	38.5	37.5	+1.0	71/1-13	11/12-20	7.99	8.89	-0.90	11.7
Baltimore (BWI)	44.7	27.2	36.1	34.8	+1.3	70/1-13	9/12-20 ⁸	8.34	9.84	-1.50	12.8
Dulles (IAD)	45.8	27.4	36.6	34.1	+2.5	69/1-4	7/1-24	7.55	8.89	-1.34	16.7

Other Occurrences: *January 20

LOOKING AHEAD TO MARCH—the transitional month. March can be a month of extremes. Below is a list of some notable March climatological statistics for Washington since records began in 1871 (snowfall records began in 1888).

Temperature Extremes			Precipitation Extremes		
Coldest: 1885	Avg. Temp.: 34.5°F	Dep. Nml.: -12.5°F	Wettest: 1891	Tot. Prec.: 8.84"	Dep. Nml.: +5.24"
Warmest: 1921 & 1945	Avg. Temp.: 55.5°F	Dep. Nml.: +9.5°F	Driest: 1910	Tot. Prec.: 0.57"	Dep. Nml.: -3.03"
Extreme Minimum: 4°F (March 4, 1873)			Snowiest: 1914	Tot. Snowfall: 19.3"	Dep. Nml.: +17.7"
Extreme Maximum: 93°F (March 23, 1907)			Most precipitation in one day (liquid): 2.79" (March 9, 1881)		
Most days with: lows < 32°F: 24 (1960) ; highs > 90°F: 3 (1907)			Most snowfall in one day: 11.3" (March 29, 1942)		